



My Next Steps:

Mentoring- Sharing your Military Spouse Experience to Help your Community



Question

As our time in the military comes to an end, I would like to explore ways in which I can provide support and mentorship to others. How can I share my expertise and experience?



Answer

As you are planning for your family to transition from the military, you may recognize that the sacrifices you have made and the experiences you have had can help other military spouses cope with military life. You may have been that military spouse who balanced a career and military life, homeschooled your children, or volunteered to contribute within your military or surrounding community. Regardless of what role or roles you embraced as a military spouse, there are opportunities to continue to contribute to the military or military-connected communities. Consider all the avenues to find the best way in which you can mentor and maintain a strong identification as a former military spouse within the military and veteran community. In many ways, mentorship should not be seen as a one-way street. As you find your mentors and provide mentorship to others, the overall goal is to continue to grow, advance, and develop professionally and personally. The following are few areas to consider with some associated resources.

Connect with Installation Services and Military-Connected Communities

If you are staying near a military installation, you may find comfort and satisfaction remaining engaged with services that are available on the installation. As a transitioning military spouse and after transition, you may be able to provide mentorship to new military spouses or those who have not learned to take advantage of the benefits that

surround the military life. You may also become a valuable resource for those who are preparing for their own transition. Examples include remaining connected to unit leadership, family support centers or volunteer opportunities on the installation. Imagine the impact of helping new military spouses navigate their first deployment or providing encouragement to another military spouse who is preparing for another permanent change of station to a location you once lived. There may also be spouses looking for a personal connection to talk about employment or education goals. If you have succeeded in these areas of your life, you may be able to provide guidance and motivation.

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Formal Mentoring Networks

The combination of your experience as a military spouse and any career or educational experience you may have balanced could make you the perfect mentor on formal mentoring networks, such as eMentor or Hiring Our Heroes

Visit MySECO on Social Media



Resources at a Glance

- [Locate](#) a family center on your installation
- [SCORE](#)
- [Veteran and Military Spouse eMentor](#)
- [Mentor.org](#)



Answer (cont.)

Military Spouse Professional Network. These are just two examples of sites that allow you to complete an online profile and identify yourself as someone who wants to provide mentorship. These programs and the others listed in the Resources section of this document will help future protégés find you based on their needs and your availability. Additionally, your current or future employer may have an Employer Mentor Program or Peer-Mentor Program. If you've been building your career for some time, you may find that you're ready to provide mentorship to others within your organization.

Within the Community

You may have the desire to personally connect with those you are mentoring. If you have a passion for teaching or impacting youth, you may want to consider mentoring within a community organization or cooperative extension. There is a wealth of educational, social, emotional, and career-related benefits for youth who receive mentoring from adults. Some examples of community organizations include schools; hospitals; youth-serving organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs; civic groups or mental health service providers. You will need to connect with each organization to learn about how your experience can best serve an organization. Cooperative Extensions, such as 4-H, also have mentoring programs within many communities throughout the United States.

Informal Networks

The military is a small community that stretches across the globe. Whether you stay close to a military installation or move away after transition, you likely will notice that military families and former military families are embedded in many communities. As you become engaged with different informal communities, such as your church, workplaces, neighborhoods and your or your children's school, take advantage of those moments to see if you can provide mentorship within an informal context. You can also continue to easily and seamlessly leverage the connections created throughout your family's military service using social media platforms.

Pulling It All Together

What's important is learning to use the formal and informal networks together in a way that best supports your desire to serve and the needs of the other individuals. While mentorship should be an important component of your personal and professional development, recognize that not all mentorship must be provided within a rigid structure and time-intensive schedule. A simple monthly coffee date with your protégé may be enough to help him or her advance in the areas in which he or she hopes to experience personal or professional growth. As your family prepares to leave the military, remember that you can use your experiences as a military spouse to enrich the lives of others.



Steps to Consider

These "Steps to Consider" are not meant as a checklist. Use the suggestions to facilitate a discussion with your service member.

- As your family prepares for transition from the military, take some time to consider what you have excelled at. Perhaps you provided support within your family readiness program, homeschooled your children, or were able to maintain employment in your field throughout your PCSs. Chances are there are other military spouses or other professionals in your field who can benefit from your experience.
- Once you have assessed your strengths, determine if there is a formal or informal way for you to provide mentorship. Examples of programs to review include the following*:

**Please note this is not meant to be an all-inclusive list. You are encouraged to search for mentoring programs that meet your needs and match your expertise.*

Installation or Military Connected

- Using the [Military Installations website](#), connect with a representative at the Family Center on the installation. Inquire about opportunities to stay connected with the community.

Formal

- Look for opportunities to connect with protégés using the following sites:
 - [Veteran and Military Spouse eMentor](#)
 - [Military Entrepreneur eMentor](#)
 - [Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Professional Network](#)
 - [SCORE](#)



Steps to Consider (cont.)

These “Steps to Consider” are not meant as a checklist. Use the suggestions to facilitate a discussion with your service member.

- [Blue Star Families Mentoring Program](#)
- Local chapters of military-connected organizations
- [Mentor.org](#)
- Your current workplace

Community

- Local Youth-Serving Organizations
 - [Boys and Girls Club](#)
 - [YMCA](#)
- Local Schools or hospitals
- [4-H Mentoring](#)

Informal

- Your neighborhood
- Church/house of worship
- Children’s school
- *Anywhere* you can connect with others



Resources

Installation Resource

Locate a Family Center: <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/>

- In the dropdown menu, choose “I’m looking for a program or service.” Then, type in “Family Center” in the “I’m choosing from” text field. Next, you’ll be asked to filter by installation or zip code. After making your selection, select the “Search” button.

Formal Mentoring Resources

- Veteran and Military Spouse eMentor: <https://www.ementorprogram.org/veteran-spouse-ementor/>
- Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Professional Network: <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/military-spouses/>
- SCORE: <https://www.score.org/volunteer>
- Military Entrepreneur eMentor: <https://www.ementorprogram.org/entrepreneur-ementor-info/>
- Blue Star Families Mentoring Program: <https://enter.veterati.com/bsf>
- Mentor.org: <https://www.mentoring.org/>

Community Mentoring Resources

- Boys and Girls Club: <https://www.bgca.org/>
- YMCA: <https://www.ymca.net/>
- 4-H Mentoring: <https://4-h.org/get-involved/mentoring/>

Related MySTeP Topics

Employment Assistance

- Connecting with Mentors to Ease your Family’s Transition from the Military
- Networking to Find Employment as your Family Transitions from the Military

Emotional Health Support

- Maintaining your Connection to the Military Community after Transition
- Connecting with Veteran Service Organizations after Transition from the Military